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Baptist Info

Official Organ of the General Baptist Convention of North Carolina, Inc.

VOLUME 85

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, APRIL, 1963

No. 4

ONE DAY SESSION—CHADBOURN, N. C.

The Second Annual "With the People" One Day Session of the General Baptist State Convention will be held at the St. Stephen Baptist Church, Chadbourn, Reverend I. B. Horton, pastor, Tuesday, May 8, beginning at 10:00 A.M.

HOW TO GET THERE

From points west: Take Highway 74 from Charlotte, east to Chadbourn. From points north: Take Highway 301 to Lumberton; from Lumberton take Highway 74 south to Chadbourn.

From points east: Take Highway 74 from Wilmington, northeast to Chadbourn. Follow General Baptist Convention sign from intersection of Highways 74 and 410 to the church. Dinner will be served at the church for \$1.00.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Baptists! Men, women, boys and girls. Pastors, Deacons, Laymen, Missionary Sisters, Sunday School, BTU Workers and Ushers. Moderators, Auxiliary Presidents, District Chairmen and Leaders.

Still lingering in our minds is the fine session held in 1962 with the Cedar Grove Association. 1963 must be a banner year. Come by bus, car train or by whatever means you can, but by all means, be present.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Many of our people never get an opportunity to attend the Convention. They don't know our Convention leaders. They never get first hand information about the program and Objectives of the Convention.

Our wide awake and alert president, Dr. R. M. "Help me Somebody" Pitts, being aware of this, led the Convention to "Take the Convention to the people" for the One Day Session. This we are doing with no regrets.

What can we expect? Good Christian fellowship. The fusion of kindred minds and spirits. Inspiration. The challenge of great Causes inspire and lift us to high ideals.

Our Convention Leaders will be there, meet and know:

Our illustrious President, Dr. R. Mack Pitts
Our efficient and hard working Executive Secretary, Dr. O. L. Sherrill

The Assistant to Dr. Sherrill, Reverend C. C. Craig

The Recording Secretaries, Rev. J. R. Manley and Rev. C. W. Ward

The new Book Store Manager, Rev. John Fleming
Dr. Sherrill's Secretary and right arm, Mrs. Dunn
The Convention's Treasurer, Rev. C. R. Edwards
Your Informer Editor, Rev. C. W. Kerry
Executive Committee Chairman, Dr. J. F. Wertz
General Board Chairman Dr. J. E. Tillett and Vice Chairman, Rev. J. Ray Butler

The Secretary, Dept. Interracial Cooperation, Dr. W. R. Grigg

The Auxiliary Heads will be there:

Women's Auxiliary President; The charming, dynamic leader of our Baptist women, Mrs. M. A. Horne

Women's Executive Secretary; The competent and efficient power behind the throne, Dr. Ellen Alston

The Laymen's League President; The personable Frank Marshall

Sunday School and BTU Leaders:

The persuasive, ever challenging Mr. E. M. Butler and Mr. J. T. Hawkins

The Ushers' President; Never say die or quit, Mr. Arthur Williams

All will be on hand to greet you and welcome you to the One Day Session.

Two of our most powerful preachers are scheduled to preach. Rev. S. A. Raper of Shelby and Rev. J. B. Humphrey of Charlotte. The trip will be worthwhile just to hear these men.

WHAT TO BRING!

Money! Our budget is \$226,000.00 for the current year. At the Board Meeting, March 14, Dr. Sherrill reported that \$47,393.84 had been raised. This means we are \$178,606.16 from our goal over all.

(Continued on Back Cover)

THE BAPTIST INFORMER

ORGAN OF THE GENERAL BAPTIST STATE
CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

COLEMON W. KERRY, JR., *EDITOR*

Published the fifteenth of each month at Raleigh, North Carolina. Second Class Paid at Raleigh, N. C.

Address all communications for publication and inquiry to, *Baptist Informer*, Baptist Headquarters, P. O. Box 237, Raleigh, N. C.

SUBSCRIPTION \$2:00 PER YEAR

"HE IS RISEN"

Paul declared, "If Christ be not risen, then our preaching is in vain." The whole of the Christian faith rests upon this supreme fact. This declaration is not an argument nor an issue for debate. If Christ be not risen, vain our preaching, vain our hope, vain our efforts to bring into reality the Kingdom of our God.

Paul did not say if the Immaculate Conception be not a fact, vain our preaching. He does not say if the Virgin Birth be not reality, vain our preaching. He is emphatic and certain at one point and one point only, "If Christ is still sleeping in the tomb sealed by Roman authority, vain our preaching."

The impact of Paul's assertion cast gloomy shadows across the world of the Christian philosophy and concept. If at the last test Christ has failed, all and everything connected with God's plan of redemption would have been vain.

The fact of His existence, good. His refreshing and revealing interpretation of the mind and heart of God, good. His ministry to those diseased in body and mind, good. His compassion for those suffering body hunger, good. His exemplary life and supreme example, good. His humiliation at the hands of cruel men, yet without complaint, good. His death on the cross, blood oozing from the wounds on His brow; blood seeping from the stripes on His back; blood dripping from His nail pierced hands and feet; blood gushing from His speared side, to atone for man's sin, good—BUT all in vain if He be not risen.

Thus the story could not end in the graveyard. In fact, it can never end until every nation shall hear the voice of our LIVING LORD say, "I am He who WAS dead but BEHOLD, look, see, examine, scrutinize, I am alive FOREVER more.

This is the Christian's hope. This is the real story of Easter. This is the aspiring point of every soul. We now await the fulfillment of His prophetic words, "If I go I will RETURN again and receive you into myself."

General Convention Roster

W. H. Davidson, *President Emeritus*
R. M. Pitts, *President*
J. W. White, *1st Vice President*
J. R. R. McRay, *2nd Vice President*
W. M. Fuller, *3rd Vice President*
J. B. Humphery, *4th Vice President*
J. R. Manley, *Recording Secretary*
O. L. Sherrill, *Executive Secretary*
C. W. Ward, *Assistant Secretary*
C. C. Craig, *Asst. to the Exec. Secretary*
Jerry Drayton, *Historian*
R. Irving Boone, *Statistician*

MASS MEETING—FORSYTH COUNTY

Guest Minister The Rev. Coleman W. Kerry
Music Friendship Baptist Church Choirs
On May 1, 1963 at 3:00 P. M., the Forsyth County Missionary Union will observe its 10th Annual Missionary Mass Meeting. More than forty-four Circles and Junior Departments will dress in white with individual placards and march six long blocks to the New Bethel Baptist Church, Winston-Salem headed by the American Legion Band to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers."

The featured speaker will be the Reverend Coleman W. Kerry, pastor, Friendship Baptist Church in Charlotte and Editor of the Baptist Informer. He will be accompanied by the combined choirs of Friendship.

The minister will be presented by Dr. Jerry Drayton, host pastor. The march will be headed by President Horne. Mrs. Clara N. Hayes is president of the Union.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED THROUGH THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE GENERAL BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1963

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Foreign Missions | \$ 244.23 |
| Shaw University | 5,539.46 |
| Scholarships | 300.00 |
| Divinity School | 310.00 |
| Oxford Orphanage | 166.20 |
| STATE MISSIONS: | |
| Designated—Unified | 1,425.95 |
| Building Fund | 20.00 |
| Baptist State Convention | 250.00 |
| Baptist Informer | 182.50 |
| Designated Gifts | 190.00 |
| MISCELLANEOUS: | |
| Refund—N. C. Sales Tax | 116.78 |
| Promotional Work (Bethulah Association) | 350.00 |
| Loan received | 700.00 |
| GRAND TOTAL: | \$9,815.11 |

"AMONG THE BRETHREN"

Rev. Wesley "I Like That" Grant, pastor, World Wide Baptist Tabernacle, Asheville, is an asset to any meeting. It was Grant who got the Board meeting off to a good start and kept it going.

Rev. George W. Dudley, pastor, Mt. Zion, Rocky Mount, is doing a tremendous job as pastor and civic leader. He is looked upon as a pastor of the whole

(Continued on Back Cover)



DR. R. M. PITTS

"THANK YOU" FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

My Fellow Laborers:

Allow me to say "Thank you" for your response to my call for the General Board meeting. It makes you feel good to know that somebody cares. We asked and made an appeal for Shaw.

Those who answered to me directly:

One Dollar Club

Miss Sadie Powell, Winston-Salem; Mr. W. T. Hairston, Advance, North Carolina; Reverend J. J. Reece; Mrs. Rosa B. Riddick; Mrs. Nena Edgerton; Mrs. Nellie A. Melvin; Mr. John E. Neely, Winston-Salem; Bro. James E. Chappell.

Those Who Gave More Than One Dollar:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Mr. Rufus Hairston, Winston-Salem..... | \$ 10.00 |
| Rev. W. C. Rogers, Church..... | 7.60 |
| Rev. S. B. Stevenson, Church..... | 10.00 |
| Rev. D. A. Costner..... | 12.50 |
| Rev. H. H. Hawkins..... | 6.00 |
| Rev. Willie Rowe..... | 15.00 |
| Mr. J. T. Hawkins..... | 50.00 |
| Rev. W. R. Monroe, Church..... | 100.00 |
| Rev. R. M. Pitts, Church..... | 10.00 |
| Rev. R. M. Pitts, Church..... | 100.00 |

This makes a total of \$329.10 reported at the meeting. May I again thank all who helped in this effort.

Now members of our Convention, there are several things I wish to say to you. First, put yourself in my position. It is impossible for me to do all and be all you expect of me. To the best of my ability, mentally and physically, I am giving my all for the Causes of our Convention.

So often I have been placed on programs without any knowledge of it. Then, when I wasn't present, I was held responsible. This is unfair to you and to me. If you want me to come, contact me, clear the date and I'll fulfill my obligation. Isn't that fair?

Do not take this to mean I am trying to get around criticism. The perils of my position are too well known for me to expect no one to criticize. I welcome your constructive criticism as well as your progressive suggestions. All I ask is, do unto me as you would have me do to you if you were where I am.

Secondly, keep our Convention workers in mind. If you can't get the head, use a neck, arm or leg. We are all part of the whole and are working for the same Cause.

Thirdly, please don't let me down at the One Day Session. I know that some things are not and have not gone to please many of you. (They are not all pleasing me.) But let us not falter. The Cause of Christ is much bigger than our petty grievances. Be forgiving in heart, understanding in mind, and let the law of love have full sway.

Pray for your officials and the objectives of our Convention. North Carolina Baptists must move forward under the Banner of Christ and rise up and meet the challenge of this crucial hour.

Your humble servant

R. Mack Pitts

SHAW UNIVERSITY

Dr. Nelson Harris, Interim President, Shaw University in remarks to the General Board, stated that the current indebtedness, in excess of \$200,000.00, had been reduced by \$70,000.00 since he was asked to serve. While this is progress, it is not as rapid as is desired. Shaw cannot project herself into future demands until this debt is cleared.

Dr. Harris challenged the Board to *Really* support Shaw. If Shaw should fail, every Baptist in the state must share the blame for it.

Your gifts, no matter how small or large, will serve a useful purpose. Shaw, student and faculty wise, is having one of her best years. Her future will be as bright as our financial support will allow.

Special Committee

Desiring and seeking Conventional status on the Trustee Board of Shaw University, a special committee was appointed by the General Board.

Dr. R. M. Pitts
Dr. O. L. Sherrill
Rev. H. W. Wiley
Rev. C. W. Ward
Dr. R. Irving Boone

The Board also adopted the recommendation of President Pitts, relative to the policy of the Convention: All money for the Objectives of the Convention is to be sent to the Headquarters of the Convention. It is the hope of the Convention that all members will cooperate with its policies.

YOU ALL COME!!!!
Chadbourn, North Carolina
ONE DAY SESSION—MAY 8TH

BAPTIST SUPPLY STORE

601-603 S. Wilmington Street

"A RELIGIOUS BUSINESS"—"Bookstore of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Inc."

BOOKS: Bibles—Commentaries—Manuals—Baptist Histories—Parliamentary Procedures—And Others
CHURCH SUPPLIES—RELIGIOUS NOVELTIES
ROBES

Buy for CASH If you CAN; CREDIT if you MUST
New Credit Policy: 10% DOWN AT TIME OF PURCHASE; THE REST IN 30 DAYS.

SERVICE—OUR FIRST—INTEREST

John W. Fleming, Manager

Mrs. Zarah Noble, Bookkeeper

Editorially Speaking - - -

Maintaining and continuing the operation of the Baptist Supply Store was a wise and noble decision. The store can serve a useful purpose and at the same time pay its own way.

The auditors report reflects what has not been openly said. The financial difficulty experienced by the store, was not due to inefficient operation, inadequate supplies, late literature or even non-support. The store was just too TRUSTING. Big debts were incurred by selling on CREDIT to pastors and churches who would not pay their bills.

At present there are accounts unpaid amounting to \$5,255.68 for periods exceeding two years. In a report, released by the former manager, Rev. C. W. Ward, it was stated that if these pastors and churches would pay their bills the store could pay, in full, all creditors and have over \$800.00 left.

It is inconceivable that a Christian pastor or a Christian church could come to a Christian store and buy Christian supplies and literature and then be un-Christian and not pay. This is exactly what has happened with the Book Store.

Bro. Fleming has his work cut out for him. In debt already, folk won't pay and he is called upon to make the store go. It is our sincere hope that he will get the full cooperation of very church and pastor. His is a Herculean task.

It is not know what policies he will set up or how he will proceed, but, if he is open for suggestion, you can't beat CASH and CARRY. Honest folk will gladly comply; the dishonest will grumble and complain.

With all diligence we are seeking the names and amounts of these unpaid accounts. If we succeed in getting them we shall be just as un-Christian as our un-Christian, non paying friends and publish them. Our chances are good.

Report Of Former Manager

Report of C. W. Ward, Part-time Manager

Baptist Supply Store

To the president, officers and members of the General Baptist Convention:

Brethren I beg to make my report. At the request of the president of our convention, Dr. R. M. Pitts, and the executive secretary, Dr. O. L. Sherrill, I took over as part time manager of the Baptist Supply Store May 15, 1961.

It was understood that I would accept no salary, but that if an honorarium was possible at the end of the Convention's year it would be acceptable. (large or small)

In May of 1961 at the time I took over, the supply store was in arrears to publishing boards and supply houses to the tune of \$10,500.00. Most of these houses had refused to grant further credit to the store. We were able to reestablish credit with all of these houses and to some extent stock the store.

Also at this time accounts receivable (amount owing the store, see exhibit C in Audit) \$11,345.43. As of Feb. 28, 1963 accounts receivable was \$5,255.68. It is less than that now, March 13, 1963 which means that over a period of 20 months we have collected \$6,089.75 in back accounts that were owing to the store.

Since May of 1961, we have been able to reduce the accounts payable from \$10,500.00 to \$4,440.42. This has been accomplished by borrowing or accepting gifts from the Convention in the amount of \$4,479.41. Of this amount, \$2,000.00 has been repaid, which means that we owe to the Convention via Dr. Sherrill's office \$2,479.41. This makes a grand total of accounts payable \$6,919.81. In positive figures, over a period of 20 months the amount paid on accounts payable \$3,580.17.

At the present time the supply store owes twenty-five creditors ranging from \$1.76 to \$882.14. The total amount owing these firms is \$4,440.42. Most of these firms are demanding immediate payment or some satisfactory arrangements to be worked out with the store for payments.

The names of the Executive Secretary and that of your part-time manager appear on a promissory note, made to the Broadman Press for \$1,633.12. Of this amount \$750.98 has been paid leaving a balance of \$882.14 as shown in your schedule of accounts payable.

It has been a pleasure to do what I could for the Convention. I thank you for letting me serve you.

(Continued on Page 5)



Personality of the Month

Organizer, administrator, church builder, civic leader, preacher, and pastor gives some insight to the personality of the month. Dr. James F. Wertz, born in Newberry, S. C., son of an outstanding Baptist minister, Dr. L. W. Wertz and a Christian mother, Mrs. Clara Hardy Wertz, is making an outstanding contribution to the community, state and nation.

His educational pursuits carried him to Myers Street School, Charlotte; North Carolina College, Durham; and Shaw University, Raleigh.

Dr. Wertz was married to Miss Alberta Margaret Williams. Three fine children, James F., Jr., Clara and Langston, were born to this union. Inspired by their father and nurtured by their mother, each of them is now making unusual and outstanding contributions.

Pastorates include Bright-Hopewell, Laurinburg, First Baptist, Southern Pines and St. Paul, Charlotte, where he now serves. It was during his pastorate at Bright-Hopewell and while serving as President of the State Sunday School and BTU Convention that the James F. Wertz Oratorical Contest was born. Untiring, always in search of new avenues of service and seeking to inspire youth, Dr. Wertz originated the idea which later assumed his name.

The new St. Paul Baptist Church is a tribute to his ability to organize, persuade and motivate people to high ideals. Within five years from the date of call, the church moved into the beautiful and spacious new edifice.

The latest venture of Dr. Wertz is a weekly TV series known as the Opportunity Hour, seen each Sunday over Station WSOC-TV. Opportunity Hour is sponsored by the Opportunity Foundation, and interracial organization seeking better human relations and community betterment, which was founded and organized by Dr. Wertz, who also serves as president. In addition to the TV series, Dr. Wertz is heard each Sunday over Radio Station WGIV with

the regular 11:00-12:00 worship from the St. Paul Church.

Asking Dr. Wertz what accounts for his success and drive, he had this to say, "To succeed, one must have a made up mind, a burning desire, a determined will. Aim high, maintain an humble spirit and put forth best efforts always."

Dr. Wertz was married, after the passing of his first wife, in 1962, to Mrs. Jessie Bowser, widow of the late attorney, J. S. Bowser. They reside at the spacious pastorium on Newland Road, also built under Dr. Wertz's leadership.

Dr. Wertz now serves as: Moderator, Mt. Peace Association; member of the Mayor's Committee on Community Relations; Board member, North Carolina Conference of Christians and Jews; Member, Social Planning Commission, City of Charlotte; Chairman, Executive Committee, General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; Member of NAACP and YMCA.

No, this is not the end of the story. Chapters are still being written and explorations are still being made. We salute and wish for Dr. Wertz continued years of effective service.

(Continued from Page 4)

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE as of March 13, 1963

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Abingdon Press | \$ 143.26 |
| Baptist Book Store | 76.25 |
| Bentley & Simon | 53.15 |
| Broadman Press | 882.14 |
| Cambridge University Press | 11.75 |
| Christian Book Store | 35.74 |
| Christian Publications | 53.72 |
| Church Budget Envelope Co. | 500.00 |
| Double Envelope Corporation | 315.37 |
| William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. | 96.75 |
| Harper and Brothers | 232.99 |
| The Hermitage Art Company | 1.76 |
| Hill Directory Co. | 38.11 |
| Judson Press | 100.00 |
| Lambert Huffman Publishers | 46.19 |
| Light and Life Press | 252.23 |
| Martin & Morris Music, Inc. | 57.02 |
| National Baptist Publishing Board | 112.88 |
| National Baptist Training Union Board | 425.98 |
| National Church Goods Supply | 93.95 |
| Raleigh Office Supply Co. | 88.47 |
| Fleming H. Revell Co. | 129.54 |
| Rodeheaver Hall-Mack Co. | 94.62 |
| Standard Publishing | 566.11 |
| United States Pencil Co. | 32.44 |

TOTAL\$4,140.42

Note that the amount of accounts receivable is **\$5,255.68**. If we could collect this amount we could pay our creditors and have a balance of **\$815.21**.

I hesitated to make any statement at the convention in November, because I did not have the auditor's figures to support any statement which I might make.

Thank you for letting me make this presentation to you at this time.

I wish to express appreciation to Mrs. Sarah Noble, the sales-lady for her cooperation in compiling and typing this report.

C. W. Ward

Woman's Page-----

"WHO KNOWETH WHETHER THOU ART
COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME
AS THIS?"

Dear Sister:

We trust you are going forward in raising your QUOTA in our ten thousand dollar (\$10,000.00) drive for Shaw University.

The drive will close May 6, 1963. We have chosen a special day to receive all reports. We will meet in Chadbourn, North Carolina at the St. Stephen Baptist Church (Wilkes and Princess Streets,) May 8, 1963 at 10:00 A. M., with the General Baptist State Convention in its One-Day Session.

We want you or a representative to come to this meeting with your report. Let us join hands in this intensive drive for our Christian school.

However, if it is impossible for you or one of your representatives to be present, please send your report to our State Office on or before May 6, 1963, in order that the name of your organization may be called at this meeting with all other reports. Remember, we want you to be present. Ride down with your pastor.

Please do not mail your report on May 6th. It will not reach the office in time. Please mail it no later than May 4th or 5th.

The organization reporting the highest amount over its QUOTA will be awarded at the Annual Session of our Convention which convenes in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, August 13-16, 1963

We are depending on you and your workers. Shaw University is depending on us. May we continue to work and pray for a spiritual and financial blessing.

Your President,
Mrs. M. A. Horne

Send report to—Mrs. Ellen S. Alston, P. O. Box 1818, Raleigh, N. C.

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1963 THROUGH THE OFFICE OF WOMAN'S BAPTIST HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY CONVENTION OF N. C.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| HOME MISSIONS | |
| Undesignated | \$ 874.13 |
| Institutes | 275.50 |
| FOREIGN MISSIONS | |
| Undesignated | 235.63 |
| Foreign Scholarship | 20.00 |
| CHRISTIAN EDUCATION | |
| Shaw Expansion—Scholarships | 643.75 |
| DESIGNATED GIFTS | |
| Orphanage | 66.75 |
| Building Fund | 7.25 |
| District Conferences | 4.00 |
| SALES AND SERVICES | |
| Helpers | 757.48 |
| Guide - Handbook | 12.75 |
| Junior Leaders | 8.00 |
| Mimeography work | 5.50 |
| Books | 66.55 |
| OTHER RECEIPTS | |
| Rentals | 84.60 |
| Students Loans | 30.00 |
| TOTAL | \$3,091.89 |

EXCERPTS FROM LETTER OF A DEDICATED
WOMAN'S BAPTIST HOME AND FOREIGN
MISSIONARY CONVENTION OF N. C.
SPECIAL WORKER

714 King Street
Windsor, N. C.
April 3, 1963

Dear Dr. Alston:

Some weeks ago, I was given a letter from Mrs. Irene V. Yeates, president of our Union of the West Roanoke Association, which indicated my appointment to serve as Chairman over the tenth (10th) district of our Woman's Baptist State Convention of N. C. After reading the instructions for the Drive, I had to enter into service to help WIN the victory for Shaw University.

I promised to get out a letter to each Supervisor or Special Worker. This I have done.

This drive does not change or affect our previous annual plans, nor does it bother our Special Workers plans. We call this an Emergency Drive for Shaw University.

I believe, we shall try to show the good results of working by districts. I am anxious to make this drive a victorious one.

We must keep ONE thought in mind, see it being carried out step by step. By so doing, we can knit our workers into one homogeneous whole, all centered on the ONE IDEA.

Yours for a victorious drive,
R. L. Boyce

"HE IS RISEN—HE LIVES"

It is Easter time once more—that season of the year which, to the Christian, brings the mingled feeling of sorrow and gladness. Sorrow fills our hearts as we recall the unjust trial, the shameful crucifixion on Golgotha's Hill, and the burial of the bruised and broken body in Joseph's unused tomb. Gladness fills our hearts as we recall the first Easter morn when the angel said to the faithful women, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. . . He is risen . . . He is not here.

Yes, He is Risen. . . He Lives. He walks the dusty road, shares our poverty, and breaks bread with us in our humble homes. He knows our needs and sympathizes with us in our sorrows. He came not to rule over us but to reign in our hearts. Not only is He alive, but His spirit is in our lives. Let us return even now to Jerusalem to tell the others.

May you have a blessed Easter.

President M. A. Horne

"The Church And It's Changing Ministry"

PART 1—From a recent study release by Robert Clyde Johnson, we want to share with our readers some current opinions. The first in the series will discuss—"THE POSTURE OF THE CHURCH"

The Church has never lacked critics. And that is as it should be. But in recent years the critics have found their ranks swelling in an unexpected way. Most of the new additions have not been carping uninformed outsiders, but responsible informed churchmen — keen laymen, conscientious pastors, leading church executives, renowned theologians, concerned social scientists. This strange development has sparked an odd public debate about the "success" or "failure" of the contemporary Church, with many regret but which no one of us can ignore.

Undoubtedly most of us feel that we should listen to these imposing latter-day critics of the Church. We may even feel that we should confess openly that their criticism is largely justified and true. But on second thought it is not at all clear to many among us just what we are supposed to confess.

The "Success" of the Church

1. The critics tell us, for example, that the Church in the United States has become impotent and inept. Perhaps so. But what of the other side of the picture?

- Church membership has increased 30% during the past ten years, from 87,000,000 to 112,000,000 persons.
- Financial contributions to churches have risen more than 100% during this same period and now total almost \$2,500,000,000 annually.
- We are in the midst of the most amazing building boom in church history, a surge which last year passed the billion dollar mark.

2. The critics tell us that the Church is innocuous and exerts no decisive influence on contemporary life. But what of the facts the critics so often fail to mention?

- More than 10,000,000 Bibles are sold each year, representing an increase of 140% in a five-year period.
- Church attendance has increased 10% in a decade and now exceeds 50% of the membership; this means that more than 50,000,000 Americans are in church on a given Sunday.
- Sunday schools have increased their enrollment by 14,000,000 pupils during this same ten-year period, and have recruited 1,000,000 new teachers.

3. The critics tell us that the Church has become irrelevant. But is this what recent developments would suggest?

- Countless national political figures, business leaders, and celebrities now publicly and unashamedly confess their faith.
- Religion was the most discussed issue in the last presidential campaign.

—At present only two of our 100 Senators are not members of churches, and even they insist that they are "protestants."

4. The critics tell us that the Church is playing no significant role in the shaping of the new American culture. But how can all of the counter-evidence be ignored?

The public-opinion polls report that almost everyone in our nation believes in God.

—Americans took the initiative in securing a meditation room in the United Nations headquarters.

—Countless television and movie stars fall over themselves to project a religious image.

—The most spectacular, popular, and expensive motion pictures in recent years have been those with a Biblical plot or a religious motif.

—Songs with religious themes are consistently among the weekly "top twenty" recordings.

—A religious crusade will fill a football stadium or pack Madison Square Garden.

—The pledge of allegiance to the American flag has recently been amended to include explicitly the notion that we are a nation "under God."

—Et cetera.

—Et cetera.

—Et cetera.

These are *Facts*. They could be multiplied for pages. And there is solid statistical evidence to support them. Who can help being impressed by such a display of factual evidence?

One answer is that the most informed and imposing current critics of the Church are among those least impressed. Somehow they remain unswayed by the "facts." This makes one thing fairly obvious. Whatever it is that these critics have in mind as they hurl their charges, it is not something that can be answered by documenting statistics or drafting graphs.

The "Failure" of the Church

What, then, are the criticisms we are being asked to face? Three seem to be repeated again and again:

(1) The Church does not understand itself; it is confused about its real nature and about its intended mission as the Body of Christ in the world. (2) The Church is virtually paralyzed by a crippling self-preoccupation. (3) The Church is increasingly afflicted with what can be called "organizational sclerosis," that is to say, a hardening of its institutional arteries that prevents it from swimming in the main currents of twentieth-century life.

Let us give the critics their own day in court as they document these charges.

(Continued on Back Cover)

A pastor of a church in the greater New York area, a church with a program described as "highly successful," comments:

The local church has been "ghetto" and self-preservation minded. It has been unwilling to define its ministry in terms that look beyond its institutional confines.

It has built multimillion-dollar buildings to be used once a week for education and worship, while around the corner people live in impossible housing seven days a week. It has provided hygienic buildings, programs, and curriculums, but has failed to take seriously its calling to be a community, to empty itself, and to serve a sick world.

A leading excutive of the United Presbyterian Church has remarked for publication:

There is in our Church a great preoccupation with self-centered piety, petty moralisms, bosom-centered hymns, prettying up our buildings and worship experience, and adding more and more busywork to keep people occupied with the household chores of our assorted organizations.

But there is too little honest wrestling with the real issues and the serious crises of life in this world—the kind of wrestling that grows out of an understanding of the gospel and an acute concern for persons, and that results in redemptive action in arenas of man's social, economic, and political relationships, realistically recognizing and tackling the great issues of justice, freedom, and equality of opportunity in relation to the complicated power structures of our society.

These are brutal charges. They are also typical. They could be duplicated a hundred times over.

And we should notice that they cannot be dismissed as outbursts of the angry young men who, like the poor, we have always with us. Nor can they be traced only to "maladjusted" and "unsuccessful" pastors, and thus shrugged off as sour grapes. Also, we might be able to ignore them if they represented no more than a new wave of the recurrent grouching of ministers about the "indifferent," "uninformed," and "theologically illiterate" laity with whom they must work; but this is not the case. Nor do we have reason to discount them because they originate outside the Church, among those frequently maligned "pagans" who "speak from another point of view" and therefore "obviously utilize the wrong criteria."

No one of these convenient and familiar escape hatches is available to us just now. Indeed, if we do set out to find the principal source of the criticism, we discover that it intensifies rather than diminishes the seriousness of the critique. For we are confronted by two additional disconcerting facts:

a. The candid self-criticism of the critics is, if anything, more pointed and stringent than their critique of the Church at large.

(To Be Continued In Next Month's Issue)

ONE DAY SESSION—From Front Cover

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| The Gen. Convention's share is \$ | 130,000.00 |
| Supply Store | 2,000.00 |
| Women's Auxiliary | 70,000.00 |
| Sunday School Convention | 6,000.00 |
| Baptist Training Union | 4,500.00 |
| Baptist Informer | 1,000.00 |
| Usher's Convention | 4,000.00 |
| Laymen's Convention | 3,500.00 |
| Designated Gifts | 5,000.00 |

President Pitts made a special appeal to each association and auxiliary at the Board Meeting. The need is both great and urgent. This is a time of utter sacrifice. The Cause demands our best efforts now.

Associations and auxiliaries are called upon to push us over our goal of \$41,750.00 at the One Day Session.

THIS IS THE CHALLENGE, NOT A DEMAND

(Continued from Page 2)

community. North Carolina and Rocky Mount are blessed with his dynamic personality.

Rev. J. Ray Butler, Ebenezer, Wilmington, is a daring, forthright pastor and leader. He has led the church to a stewardship commitment second to none. Ebenezer operates on a "*Tithe and Offering Covers All*" basis. Blessings on you.

Rev. "Joe" Dickerson, First, Wilmington is instilling new life and new interest in the church. Keep up the good work and let us hear more from you.

Rev. T. C. Graham, West Durham Baptist, Durham; Rev. G. H. Badgette, Moderator, Cedar Grove Association; and Reverend A. F. McCleave, Wall Street, Sanford, are new members on the General Board. Congratulations.

Dr. A. S. Croom, Durham; Rev. W. M. Warner, Yanceyville; and Rev. J. W. Mason, Silver City, all in declining health would appreciate a card, letter or \$\$\$. Let us not forget those who have served us well.

Your Editor, Colemon W. Kerry, is going to cut you off the mailing list if you fail to renew your subscription to the Informer. Don't make him do this.

Flash! ! Dr. O. L. Sherrill and Rev. C. C. Craig are off and running, as usual, carrying the Convention to every nook and corner of our state. Hard workers, both of them.

Dr. W. R. Grigg, Secretary, Department of Interracial Cooperation, State Convention, is still knocking on closed doors. As they open, rush in.

Keep up the fine work, Doctor, your labor is not in vain.